

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 2023

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: MORE VIEWS ON SUAREZ'S CANDIDACY

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS, A CENTRO DEMOCRATICO LEADER, JUAN ANTONIO ORTEGA, VOLUNTEERED THE PREDICTION, WHICH HE FRANKLY ACKNOWLEDGED WAS HIS HOPE, THAT PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WOULD NOT RPT NOT PRESENT HIMSELF AS A CANDIDATE FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE. NOTING SUAREZ'S VERY SUBSTANTIAL POPULARITY, ORTEGA RECOGNIZED THE POTENTIAL DANGER THAT SUAREZ COULD BE CHALLENGED ON DEMOCRATIC GROUNDS BY THE LEADER (FOR EXAMPLE, FRAGA) OF A POLITICAL GROUP SCORING HEAVILY IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS, ORTEGA THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THIS WOULD NOT HAPPEN. IN THE EVENT
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SUAREZ'S REMAINING IN OFFICE WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY A BROAD RANGE OF CENTRIST ELEMENTS IN THE NEXT CORTES. HIS STAYING, ORTEGA ADDED, COULD BE DEFENDED ON THE GROUNDS THAT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PRESIDING OVER THE TRANSITION WOULD CONTINUE THROUGH THE CONSTITUENT PHASE. IN THE MEANTIME THERE WAS NO REASON FOR HIM TO RESIGN OR TO SEEK ANY KIND OF DIRECT POPULAR MANDATE.

AS FOR GIVING SUAREZ THE ASSURANCES NECESSARY SO THAT HE WOULD NOT FEEL THE NEED FOR SUCH A MANDATE, ORTEGA SAID THAT COULD BE DONE BY AGREEMENT BEFOREHAND WITH THE VARIOUS CENTRIST GROUPS. IF SUAREZ CHOSE TO RUN, ORTEGA FELT SURE HE WOULD NOT TIE HIMSELF DOWN TO THE MARTIN VILLA OPERATION.

2. FIGURES FROM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM" WITH WHOM WE HAVE RECENTLY TALKED, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SUAREZ, IF HE STOOD FOR THE LOWER HOUSE, WOULD NOT TAKE THE RISKS INVOLVED IN FAVORING A SINGLE POLITICAL OPITION. IF HE WERE TO CHOOSE TO RUN AS THE LEADER OF THE MARTIN VILLA/SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC COALITION, HE WOULD FIND THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PROCESS SUFFERED. WHILE HIS POPULARITY WOULD CERTAINLY INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SEATS THAT A CENTER-LEFT COALITION RECEIVED, NONETHELESS HE WOULD FIND HIMSELF CAST AS A PARTISAN FIGURE AT THE HEAD OF A CONTROVERSIAL GROUP WHICH COULD NOT WIN A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS. HE WOULD WIND UP LOSING MORE THAN HE WOULD GAIN. ANTON CANELLAS, THE HEAD OF THE IMPORTANT CATALAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUP, TOLD US HE HAD TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HE COULD SEE WHY SUAREZ MIGHT WANT A LOWER HOUSE SEAT IN ORDER TO MORE EFFECTIVELY LEAD THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS AND THE GOVERNMENT. HE HAD SUGGESTED TO SUAREZ THAT IF HE DECIDED IT WAS NECESSARY TO RUN HE SHOULD RUN AS AN INDEPENDENT FROM HIS SMALL HOME PROVINCE OF AVILA WITHOUT ASSOCIATING HIMSELF WITH ANY PARTICULAR CENTRIST GROUP. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE VARIOUS CENTRIST GROUPS, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, CONFIDENTIAL

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CENTRO DEMOCRATICO AND THE NEW CENTER-LEFT OUTFIT WOULD ALL EASILY SUPPORT HIS RETENTION AND HIS LEADERSHIP.

3. SUBSEQUENTLY, TODAY'S "DIARIO 16" ADVANCED THE "AVILA FORMULA" BUT IN A VERY CONFUSING FASHION. AFTER SAYING SUAREZ WOULD STAND FROM AVILA, THE STORY SAID THE GOS'S TRUE RIVAL "WAS FRAGA'S ALIANZA POPULAR." IT CLAIMED POLLS INDICATED THAT THE AP NOW IS THE SINGLE LARGEST PARTY AMONG THE ELECTORATE (THAT MAY BE, BUT 20-25PERCENT IS NOT A GREAT DEAL). CONSEQUENTLY SUAREZ WOULD LEAD A BROAD COMBINATION OF INDEPENDENTS AND MEMBERS OF VARIOUS CENTRIST PARTIES, IN EFFECT, ANOTHER VERSION OF A GRAND CENTRIST ALLIANCE. THIS WOULD LEAD TO A CORTES OF NUMEROUS SMALL PARTIES, NONE PREPONDERANT BUT PROVIDING A SURE GOVERNING MAJORITY. THE ARTICLE ADDS THIS OPERATION IS "COMPLEX" AND THEREFORE NOT CERTAIN. EATON

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